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PVN OP 015 Excavation Report

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Operation 15

Structure 30

Structure 30 is 3.5m north of Str. 32 and 2m northeast of Str. 29 on the east edge of the densely settled North Cluster of La Sierra. The approximately 47m² cleared within Subop. 15A revealed about two-thirds of this low platform. Digging was pursued to maximum depths of 1.2m and 0.6m below modern ground surface beyond and within construction, respectively. These excavations exposed one major building phase for Str. 30 along with hints of an earlier construction effort. Work on Str. 30 was conducted from February through March, 1988 and was directed by C. Eaton and T. Neff.

Time Spans

Time Span	Construction	Units	Strata	Features	Date(s)
1	-	-	S.1-2	-	LCLI, II
2	-	-	S.3	-	LCLII, I
3	Str. 30-Sub1	U.1	-	-	LCLII
4	Str. 30-1 st	U.2-11, 14-16	-	-	LCLII, III
5	Str. 30-1 st	U.11-13	S.4	F.1	LCLIII, II
6	Str. 30-1 st	-	-	F.2-4	LCLIII, EPC
7	-	-	S.5-8	F.5	

Time Span 1

The earliest activity attested to in the environs of Str. 30 is the deposition of a brown, soft-compacted sandy soil (S.1). Stratum 1 was exposed to a maximum thickness of 0.24m east of Str. 30-1st (its base was not encountered) and rises 0.1m over 2.78m east-to-west. Sizable pottery sherds found in the upper 0.06m of S.1 likely originated in overlying S.3 and worked their ways downward over time.

Deposited at roughly the same time is S.2, a tan, fine-textured, hard-compacted soil containing numerous small white inclusions and artifacts. Stratum 2 was revealed to a maximum thickness of 0.16m (its base eluding us beyond excavation limits) and gradually ascended 0.04m over 1.55m north-to-south running under Str. 30-1st's northern terrace (U.2).

The recovery of artifacts from deposits dating to TS.1 points to human occupation in the area pre-dating exposed architecture.

Time Span 2

A fine-textured, hard-compacted soil that is stained dark black with carbon (S.3) was laid down atop S.1 east of Str. 30-1st. Stratum 3 contains some artifacts and is 0.05-0.14m thick. Like the underlying S.1, S.3 ascends from east-to-west, rising 0.28m over 2.8m in that direction. Stratum 3 also thickens gradually from east-to-west. This deposit appears to constitute organic debris associated with human activity conducted in the unexcavated area west of S.3's exposure.

Time Span 3

Structure 30-Sub1 is represented by low stone wall that runs 0.75m west from under Str. 30-1st's western basal facing (U.6) before turning south. This latter extension was traced for 1.08m before excavation ceased. Most likely U.1 served as part of the foundations for a surface-level building that was mostly covered by the later construction of Str. 30-1st. Based on the limited remains of Str. 30-Sub1 that we recovered, this edifice was oriented roughly 18 degrees and seems to have contained at least one earthen-floored room.

Time Span 4

Structure 30-1st is a stone-faced platform bounded on all sides by stone facings (U.3-6) that were, in turn, fronted by terraces on the north and east (U.2 and 14). On the north, therefore, a 0.22m-tall terrace facing (U.2) gives way to a 0.82m-wide tread that is succeeded on the south by a 0.25m-high riser (U.3). The subsequent 1m-wide tread terminates at a 0.86m-wide wall that borders Str. 30-1st's summit on the north (U.7). Unit 7 has a 0.2m-high by 0.44m-wide step-out on the north. The wall rises an additional 0.49m above this outset. The eastern ascent seems to have closely paralleled its northern counterpart. Here the basal terrace facing (U.14) is 0.18m tall by 0.93m across and is succeeded on the west by a 0.4m-high ascent (U.4). The summit's eastern border (U.8) lies 0.95m west of U.4 and rose 0.14m above the stone-surfaced tread backing U.4 (included in U.4). Embedded near the center of U.4's paved surface are the fragments of several faced blocks that form a square measuring 0.53m on a side (U.17). Unit 17 is set even with the U.4 surface and is 0.34m west of the terrace's east edge. This construction may have formalized the passage up the eastern terraces to Str. 30-1st's summit.

Structure 30-1st's southern margin is defined by a 0.32m-high terrace facing (U.5) that is backed to the north by a 0.65m-wide tread. Remains of what might have been a stone floor (U.16) extends for at least 1.56m south of U.5. The southern basal terrace ends in a wall (U.10) which projects 0.19m above the U.5 terrace and defines the summit's south edge. The same basic pattern of construction is seen on the west. Here a 0.22m-high by 1.23m-wide stone-floored terrace (U.6) gives way to a poorly preserved 0.27m-high wall (U.9) that delimits the summit's west edge.

The summit measures 3.9x4.4m and supported a 0.37m-high (on the south) stone-faced and –surfaced bench (U.11). Unit 11 during this interval is 2.77m long east-west by 1.14m wide north-south. Unit 11 divides the summit into two spaces. North of this construction measures 1.04m north-south by 4m east-west and the floor is 0.22m higher than the floor of the southern summit compartment. The latter encompasses 1.7m north-south by 3.9m east-west.

A restricted section of Str. 30-1st's fill (U.15) was revealed between U.7 and 11 on the northern summit. Unit 15 was uncovered to a maximum thickness of 0.32m and consists of a dense concentration of medium-size stones set in a brown soil matrix.

By the conclusion of TS.4 Str. 30-1st was a stone-faced, stone-filled platform that stood 0.45-1.16m tall, covered 7.1 by 7.6m, and was aligned roughly 17 degrees. The building is highest on the north where it is ascended by two terraces 0.22-0.25m high by 0.82-0.86m wide. The remaining flanks are bordered by one to two terraces ranging from 0.18-0.4m tall and 0.65-1.23m wide. The broadest of these elements is the western terrace which was also surfaced with stone as was the second ascending terrace on the east. A square measuring 0.53m on a side and made of carefully placed fragments of cut blocks was recorded near the center of the second ascending eastern terrace. It may have served as a threshold signaling the formal point of entry to the superstructure. The platform's earthen-floored summit covers 17.2m² and contains a stone-faced and –surfaced bench that is 0.37m tall (on the south), 2.77m

long east-west by 1.14m wide north-south. The compartment lying north of this construction encompasses 4.2m² while its southern counterpart covers 6.6m². The floor of the latter space is 0.22m lower than is the surface of the northern room. Passage between the two enclosures was through a 1.14m-wide gap between U.11 and the eastern summit wall (U.8). It is likely, given how low the southern riser and summit wall are, that Str. 30-1st was also entered from this side, the southern compartment being the more public of the two summit rooms. This interpretation is tentatively supported by the presence of a stone floor of unknown dimensions which extends at least 1.56m south from the southern basal terrace.

Most constructions erected during TS.3 are primarily made of unmodified river cobbles set in a mud mortar. A general effort was made to orient the naturally flatter faces of these rocks outward. Some faced masonry blocks were found, often mixed with cobbles and tumbled debris. Several such blocks were recorded still in situ within U.6 and 4, the edifice's western basal and eastern second ascending terraces, respectively. As noted, the putative threshold on the second ascending eastern terrace was made exclusively from pieces of shaped stones.

Time Span 5

During this interval Str. 30-1st retained its basic form, basal dimensions, and orientation. The principal changes were visited on the summit where several minor modifications were made. One of these involved the erection of U.13, a low stone wall that projects 0.8m north from the U.11 bench to intersect the north wall (U.7) of the northern summit room. Unit 13 abuts U.11, 0.8m east of the latter's northwest corner, its introduction giving the bench an 'L' shape. Unit 11 was also modified during TS.5 through the addition of a 0.26m-high by 0.45m-wide wall that continues U.11's north line 1.14m to the east. Unit 11 now completely spanned the east-west width of the summit blocking passage between the northern and southern enclosures except by passing over the bench. The U.11 addition is set back (north) 0.69m from the bench's south face making for an indentation in the southern room's northeast corner that measures 0.69 by 1.14m.

Unit 12 was also raised now in the aforementioned southern enclosure. This is a stone wall that stands 0.32m high, is 0.36m wide, and runs for 1.1m north from its abutment with the southern wall of the south room (U.10). Unit 10's construction created two compartments south of U.11 where formerly there had been one. The newly formed southwest enclosure covers 1.7x2.2m while its southeastern counterpart encompasses 1.2x2.2m.

A fine-textured, hard-compacted, brown soil (S.4) seems to have been laid down now immediately east of Str. 30-1st's eastern basal terrace (U.14). This deposit is minimally 0.25m thick (its base was not revealed), contains many large fragments of ceramic vessels, and slopes down 0.78m over 7.37m west-to-east. Stratum 4 abuts U.14 and covers all but the uppermost 0.05m of that facing. Given S.4's contents and its association with U.14, it is likely that this layer accumulated during a protracted period of Str. 30-1st's occupation prior to the covering of the latter's construction during TS.6.

Feature 1 consists of a dense concentration of ceramic jars and bowls found broken in situ atop U.6, the platform's western basal terrace. This ample terrace, 6.4m long north-south by 0.9-1.4m wide, may well have served as a surface where food and liquid were stored along with pottery serving containers. Presumably these possessions were sheltered under the eaves of the superstructure's roof.

By the conclusion of TS.5 Str. 30-1st still stood 0.45-1.16m tall, measured 7.1 by 7.6m basally, and was oriented approximately 17 degrees. The only significant changes to the edifice occurred on its summit. Here the central bench (U.11) was transformed by the construction of an addition that extended U.11 fully 1.14m eastward to intersect the eastern summit wall (U.8). This expansion blocked what had

been the passageway between the summit's northern and southern enclosures and raises questions concerning how people moved between these spaces. Unit 11 was also seemingly changed into an 'L'-shaped construction during TS.5 through the addition of a stone wall that abuts the bench's north face and runs 0.8m north to intersect the northern summit wall (U.7). All-in-all, U. 11 now covered 5.3m², the room that lies directly north of it having shrunk to 3.3m² after the northern addition was made to U.11. The erection of a stone foundation south of U.11 partitioned what had been one room into two compartments of unequal size. The larger space lies west of that footing and encompasses 3.7m² while its eastern neighbor covers 2.6m². Passage between these two cubicles was through a 0.4m-wide gap between U.11 and the newly added foundation (U.12). An additional work/storage space covering ca. 7.4m² was provided by Str. 30-1st's western basal terrace where a sizable concentration of broken ceramic jars and bowls was found.

All constructions raised during TS.5 were made primarily of unmodified river cobbles set in a mud mortar. These stones are generally flat-laid, the flatter aspects of the rocks being directed outwards. The principal exception is found in U.11's eastern addition that was made of cobbles set on end.

Time Span 6

This interval is marked by the construction of ill-defined features that buried aspects of earlier architecture. Feature 2 is a 0.64m deep (maximally) deposit of generally flat-laid medium to large cobbles that was set against the north face of the platform's northern summit wall (U.7). This deposit extends for 1m north of U.7, terminating atop Str. 30-1st's second ascending terrace's north face (U.3). By this point F.2 is 0.25m thick. Feature 3, in turn, covers the east face of the platform's second ascending eastern terrace (U.4). This entity consists of large cobbles (averaging 0.1x0.2m) mixed with a few smaller examples, is 0.73m thick, and extends 0.6m east of U.4. Feature 3 is sufficiently tall that it may also have obscured the east face of U.8, the east summit wall. We could not, however, verify if this had been the case. Feature 4 is a 0.25m-thick concentration of small stones that fills the southern summit between the U.11 bench and the platform's southern summit wall (U.10). This deposit may have also been extended 1m south of U.10 where it possibly blanketed the south face of U.10 and the southern basal terrace (U.5). The stones comprising F.2-4 are all set in a brown earth matrix.

The architectural significance of F.2-4 is unclear. In no cases are they bordered by clear facings. Instead they look like fill deposits that were laid over large portions of Str. 30-1st's upper terraces and summit. It may be that they were part of a construction project that was never completed. Alternatively, they may have been introduced as part of efforts to terminate Str. 30-1st's use. In any case. There is no sign that the platform was occupied during TS.6.

Time Span 7

Following Str. 30-1st's abandonment the building was blanketed by several soil levels. The first of these deposits to be laid down is a soft-compacted, pebble-rich, brown colluvium (S.6) which was identified 5.67m east of Str. 30-1st. Stratum 6 rests directly on S.4 and forms a lens that is maximally 0.25m thick on the east. It extends 1.72m west from the east edge of excavations at which point it pinches out against the rising slope of S.4. As S.6 does not intersect any architecture associated with Str. 30-1st we cannot be certain if it was laid down late in the building's use or after it was abandoned.

Stratum 7, a coarse-textured, brown soil that includes numerous small pebbles, covers S.6 and most of Str. 30-1st. This layer is maximally 0.45m thick and is covered, in turn, by a dark brown to gray, root-rich humus horizon (S.8). Stratum 8 is 0.09-0.21m thick and blankets all of the exposed construction.

Feature 5 consists of stones fallen from final phase architecture. These rocks are embedded in S.7 and 8 and were traced for maximum distances of 1m north and south of the platform. Feature 5 extends for 5.38m east of Str. 30-1st over which distance it defines a gradually descending arc that drops 1.07m over that distance. The density of stones recorded in this portion of F.5 and the long distance over which they were traced raises questions whether this entity actually represents the remnants of building collapse. It may be that F.5-east is part of a poorly preserved casual construction added some time after Str. 30-1st's core ceased being used. The 0.1m of S.7 separating U.14 (the platform's eastern basal terrace) from F.5-east's base suggests that the latter was introduced well after the former was still being maintained.

Structure 31

Structure 31 is the tallest member of a triad of constructions found in the dense aggregate of buildings located in the northeastern portion of La Sierra. Structure 32 is 1.5m east while Str. 84 adjoins Str. 31's northwest corner. Digging conducted in Subop. 15D and E cleared approximately 56m² and reached maximum depths of 0.82m and 0.94m below modern ground surface within and outside construction, respectively. This work, directed by Amy Tucker from February through March 1995, revealed one major construction episode along with several intervals of minor modifications made to the original edifice.

Time Spans

Time Span	Constructions	Units	Strata	Features	Date(s)
1	-	-	S.1	-	MPrecl, LPrecl, LCLI
2	Str. 31-Sub1	U.15	S.2, 3	-	LCLII
3	-	-	S.2, 3	-	LCLII
4	Str. 31-1 st	U.1-9, 11, 17, 19	S.6	-	LCLII, III
5	Str. 31-1 st	U.10, 12-14, 16, 18	-	F.1, 2	LCLIII, II
6	Str. 31-1 st	U.20	-	-	LCL III
7	Str. 31-1 st	-	-	F.3	EPC, LPC
8	-	-	S.4, 5	F.4	

Time Span 1

The earliest event chronicled in the environs of Strs. 31 and 32 was the deposition of a red-brown, soft-compacted, moderately fine-textured sand (S.1). Stratum1 was revealed to a maximum thickness of 0.19m immediately west of Str. 32-1st (its base was not uncovered) and runs level for the 1.07m it was traced east-west.

Time Span 2

An undetermined amount of S.2 and 3 were deposited now to the south and west of Str.31. Both are tan soils varying somewhat in their texture and degree of compaction (S.2 on the west is moderately coarse-textured and soft-compacted, its southern counterpart being hard-compacted and fine-textured). Embedded in the southernmost exposed portion of S.3 is a dense concentration of flat-laid medium-size cobbles (U.15). Unit 15 is 0.3m thick, measures 1.17m north-south, and is completely covered by S.3. The architectural significance of U.15 is unclear. It may be the remnants of a terrace that ran east-west for an unknown distance at the base of the slope leading up to Str. 31-1st.

Time Span 3

During this interval deposition of S.2 and 3 continued, eventually burying the ambiguous remnants of Str. 31-Sub1. Strata 2 and 3 were revealed to maximum thicknesses of 0.48m and 0.54m (their bases were not encountered). Stratum 3 on the south forms a slope that rises 1.1m across 6.84m south-to-north while on the west its compatriot, S.2, ascends 1.24m over 9.62m west-to-east. It is not clear that the eminence formed by S.2 and 3 was the outcome of natural processes. Rather, this earth may have been introduced in order to create an elevated surface on which to erect Str. 31-1st.

Time Span 4

The core of Str. 31-1st is a platform that is fronted by five stone-faced ascents on the west (U.1-5). The basal riser (U.1) stands 0.2m tall and runs 0.96m eastward where it is succeeded by U.2. The latter rises 0.53m above the U.1 tread and extends 1.25m back (east) to U.3. The fill (U.17) backing U.2 consists of small to medium-size cobbles set in a tan soil matrix indistinguishable in color, texture, and degree of compaction from S.2. Unit 3, in turn, is 0.1m tall and fronts a tread measuring 0.68m across. Unit 4 ascends 0.25m above U.3 and extends 0.53m east to where it encounters the final step-up to the summit (U.5). Unit 5 stands 0.17m high and fronts a 0.45m-wide space that borders the superstructure on the west.

The uncovered portion of this summit construction consists of a stone-floored (U.19) compartment (Room 1) that covers 2.12m east-west by, minimally, 1.7m north-south (the enclosure's north edge was not found). The stone footings bordering Room 1 on the west, south, and east are 0.3-0.53m wide and rise 0.27-0.42m above the U.19 floor (U.7-9). Unit 8, the southern foundation, steps down 0.26m at a point 0.5m east of its interior corner with the western footing (U.7). Unit 8 retains this reduced height for the remaining 1.62m it runs eastward to its junction with the eastern foundation (U.9). This change in elevation seems to have been intentional and may define the limits of an expansive door leading into the summit room from the south.

The superstructure is bounded on the south by U.6, a stone terrace that corners with U.3 on the west and extends eastward (its eastern end was not found). Intersecting U.6, 1.4m east of its corner with U.3, is U.11. The latter extends 1.65m south from U.6 and measures 1.14m wide by 0.5m tall (above the U.2 terrace). A pit was seemingly dug into underlying S.2 immediately east of U.11, just prior to the latter's construction. This declivity extends for 0.9m east of the wall and has a depth of at least 0.29m (at which point it exited our excavations). The pit is filled with medium to large cobbles and a moderately soft-compacted, fine-textured, tan soil (S.6). The stones are concentrated in the pit's uppermost 0.18m. It may be that the cavity was created to stabilize U.11's foundation; though no hole was found west of the wall, this side of the unit was set 0.29m into the underlying S.2. What functions U.11 served are unclear though it may have served to delimit the west side of an earthen-floored room the north flank of which was bordered by the aforementioned U.6. How, if at all, this space was delimited on the south and east is unclear.

As TS.4 drew to a close Str. 31-1st sat atop an extensive earthen eminence that rose 1.1 and 1.24m on the south and west. This ascent was formalized on the west by a series of four stone-faced-terraces that stand 0.1-0.53m tall and measure 0.53-1.25m wide. These terraces may have served as one means of attaining the platform's summit. The superstructure would then have been reached by ascending a stone-faced step-up that rises 0.17m above the uppermost terrace. The one stone-floored room of the superstructure that we exposed encompasses (minimally) 3.6m² and was likely entered through a 1.62m-wide door in the southern wall. The door's threshold was 0.11-0.16m tall. Bounding the summit compartment are stone foundations that are 0.3-0.53m wide by 0.27-0.42m tall. No built-in furniture was

identified in the summit room. An earthen floored space may have been delimited south of the superstructure by the superstructure's southern facing (U.6) and a substantial stone wall on the west (U.11). Unit 11 projects 1.65m south of U.6. No comparable foundations were located on the south and east sides of this putative space.

Overall, Str. 31-1st's core stands 1.25m high on the west, measures (minimally) 7.16m east-west by at least 3m north-south (not including U.11), and is oriented approximately 355 degrees. All walls built at this time were fashioned of river-worn cobbles set in an earth matrix. The flatters aspects of these stones were consistently directed outwards.

Time Span 5

It may be that the south ascent leading up to Str. 31-1st was stabilized at this time by the construction of U.14. This poorly preserved terrace was found resting atop S.3, stood an estimated 0.32m high, and was 0.9m wide north-south. It is backed by a fill composed of a small cobbles set in a brown soil matrix (U.16).

Erected atop the earthen surface fronted by U.14 is a sizable enclosure (Room 2) bounded by substantial stone foundations on the south (U.13) and west (U.12). Unit 12 runs 4.65m north-south, is 0.9m wide by an estimated 0.25m tall, abuts U.11 on the north, and has a 'C'-shape. That form results from two short projections that extend eastward for 0.35m and 0.6m from U.12's north and south termini, respectively. The area contained within these extensions measures 3.05m north-south. Unit 13, in turn, is 0.23m high, 1.08m wide, and was traced for 4.97m east from its western edge (the wall's east end was not uncovered). A gap between U.12 and 13 measures 0.9m across and probably served as a door providing access to Room 2's interior. The U.6 stone terrace borders Room 2 on the north though over what distance is unclear.

Excavations along the enclosure's north margin did uncover what may be the poorly preserved remnants of a stone wall (F.2) that possibly extended the line of U.6 eastward. Feature 2 consists of a dense concentration of generally flat-laid rocks that begins 4.22m east of U.11 and runs for 5.01m eastward before deteriorating into a mass of tumbled debris (F.4). Feature 2 was recognized after the completion of excavation and its architectural reality remains open to question. Its tentative identification as a construction unit is based on the density and disposition of the stones that comprise it, especially in contrast to the patterns of rock concentration found east and west of it.

Room 2, therefore, is an earthen-floored enclosure that covers 5.8m north-south (U.6 to U.13) by an estimated 9.2m east-west (measured to the putative east end of F.2). As our excavations concentrated on revealing the compartment's perimeter we did not uncover enough of Room 2's interior to determine if it had any built-in features or space-dividers. Given its considerable girth and C-shape, U.12 might have doubled as a bench and support for perishable upper walls. Two segments of burnt earth (F.1) were also found running 2.62m east-west adjoining F.2's south face. The F.1 segments are separated by 0.44m and were may have been part of one continuous deposit originally. As it stands, F.1 seems to have filled the inferred northeast interior corner of Room 2.

Str. 31-1st's core was largely unmodified during this interval. It may be that its western basal terrace (U.1) was buried now by U.10. The latter is a 0.25m-high stone facing that lies 0.9m west of U.1 and completely blankets its predecessor beneath a fill composed of large to medium-size cobbles set in a tan soil (U.18).

At the conclusion of TS.5, Str. 31-1st consisted of a core platform that was still 1.24m high on the west and ascended from that side by four stone-faced terraces that stood 0.1-0.53m high and measured 0.53-1.25m across. The edifice's basal dimension was expanded 0.9m on the west by the construction of the U.10 basal terrace which covered its antecedent. Str. 31-1st's core now encompasses at least 8.06m east-west. South of the core was a sizable earthen-floored enclosure that covered an estimated 53.4m² and was entered through a 0.9m-wide door in the compartment's southwest corner. An area of burnt earth apparently was concentrated in the enclosure's northeast interior corner and the substantial C-shaped western wall of Room 2 may have doubled as a wall support and bench. The ascent south of Room 2 was stabilized by the construction of a 0.32m-high stone-faced terrace which is 0.9m south of the enclosure's southern foundation. The ground drops off below (south) of this terrace at a rate of 0.54m over 1.43m north-to-south.

Overall, Str. 31-1st now measures at least 15m east-west (from U.10 to the putative east edge of Room 2) by 11m north-south (from U.14 to the furthest north point excavated on Room 1), is still oriented roughly 355 degrees, and stands 1.1-1.24m high. All constructions dating to TS.5 are made primarily of river cobbles set in an earth mortar. The naturally flatter aspects of these stones are directed outwards.

Time Span 6

The only activity pertaining to this interval that we identified in our excavations was the construction of a low stone wall (U.20) that rests on and runs across the U.1 terrace at an angle of approximately 30 degrees. Unit 20 stands 0.25m tall, is ca. 0.35m wide, and was traced for a total distance of 1.25m (its southwest end was not revealed though the wall seemed to stop on the northeast within our excavations). Starting on the west margin of U.1, U.20 may have been part of an effort to re-orient the terraces leading up from the west to Room 1. As no other signs of this putative remodeling were encountered, it is possible that U.20 is a stone foundation for a fairly small building that was erected amidst the deteriorating remains of Str. 31-1st after most of the latter had been abandoned.

Time Span 7

Feature 3 is a dense concentration of small to large cobbles set in a brown soil matrix that covers U.1, 2, 10, and 20 on Str. 31-1st's west side. This entity is distinguished from fallen architectural debris by the generally flat-laid disposition of its component rocks along with their unusually high concentration in this area. Overall, F.3 is 0.48-0.62m thick and extends for 3.64m beginning 0.43m west of Str. 31-1st's western basal terrace (U.10). It may be that F.3 was introduced as fill for a late modification of the western terraces, a renovation that was never completed. Alternatively, these rocks might have been deposited as part of an effort to formally terminate at least part of Str. 31-1st by blocking access to Room 1 over the western terraces. There is no clear evidence that Room 2 was filled in or that the southern terrace (U.14) was blocked at this or at any other time. The southern part of Str. 31-1st may, therefore, have been left open if not necessarily in use through TS.7.

Time Span 8

Following the cessation of construction on Str. 31-1st the building was covered by the deposition of S.4 and 5. The former is a moderately coarse-textured, moderately hard-compacted, brown soil that accumulated to a maximum thickness of 0.48m over S.2. Stratum 5, in turn, overlies S.4 by 0.08-0.19m and is distinguished from its predecessor by a greater concentration of roots. Scattered throughout S.4 and 5 are variably dense concentrations of stones fallen from Str. 31-1st (F.4). Feature 4 was found

overlying the platform and extending at least 0.8m west of F.3; very little architectural debris was recorded south of the edifice.

Chronological Summary

The earliest periods of activity attested to in the Op. 15 excavations pertain to the Middle and Late Preclassic. A few scattered diagnostic ceramics dating to these phases were recovered from the deepest soil layers encountered in excavations conducted on and around Str. 31. Hints of Late Classic I occupation were uncovered underlying major construction efforts at Str. 30-1st and 31-1st, suggesting that the area encompassed by Op. 15 was occupied, if thinly, at this time. Signs of Late Classic II settlement are more robustly represented in our collections from both edifices along with evidence for the first stone constructions identified in the area. From the small portions of these buildings we examined, they appear to have been relatively humble constructions. Str. 30-Sub1 was apparently a surface-level edifice while Str. 31-Sub1 looks to have been a cobble terrace, perhaps associated with an as-yet-undiscovered edifice lying further upslope to the north.

Both of the investigated structures seem to have undergone considerable periods of growth during the transition between the Late Classic II and III periods. It was during this interval that substantial construction was initiated at both edifices. Significant modifications to Str. 30-1st and 31-1st persisted into Late Classic III, each of these buildings reaching their final forms at this time. At least portions of these two platforms were covered by deposits of stone and earth towards the end of Late Classic III or possibly at the start of the Early Postclassic. These 'additions' may have been parts of renovation projects that were never completed or purposeful efforts to terminate Str. 30-1st and Str. 31-1st. The very slight evidence for a Late Postclassic presence at Str. 31-1st suggests that this area was still being slightly used, or at least periodically visited, in the last Precolumbian centuries. There is no sign of any constructions raised at this time.